

admissions. Effective treatment and prevention of paresis has reduced the number of patients suffering from that disease from about 6 percent of the admissions to almost zero. In common with other mental hospitals, St. Elizabeths has been receiving an increasing proportion of aged patients. Nearly 40 percent of the hospital's admissions today are persons above 60 years of age.

With the opening this summer of the new Dorothea Lynde Dix Pavilion, an admission and treatment building, there will be greater opportunity for improving diagnosis of patients upon admission. This will permit a greater degree of intense individual attention with the possibility that the patient may be cured and discharged that much more promptly.

In addition to the recognized psychiatric treatment, St. Elizabeths has long been known for its careful attention to the physiological basis of mental illness and for its generally comprehensive interest in patient health. It is the only public mental hospital in the United States which is approved for a rotating internship, in recognition of the high caliber of performance and equipment at its medical and surgical

building. Interns at this hospital do their pediatric and obstetrical and laboratory work at other hospitals.

In appraising the accomplishments of St. Elizabeths, it is difficult to assign credit to any particular technique. Studies of the value of psychotherapy are always difficult to frame. The response of the patient may result from a variety of factors. Although some techniques, such as drug therapy, appear to give a relatively clear-cut basis of evaluation, the complications of the individual personality frustrate most efforts at evaluation of treatment. Intensive attention to the individual is the key to improvement. This conviction dates back to the hospital's report for 1888 which regarded individual attention to the patient as more important than anything else.

No less important than the new diagnostic center, the Dix Pavilion, is the plan for revised and improved statistical methods of analyzing patients on a cohort basis. When this plan is applied, new facts will be ready to aid in the evaluation of mental hospital care. St. Elizabeths is confident that the facts will justify its traditional policy.

The World on a String

A mental patient's views on television are here reprinted with minor editorial change from the journal written and published by residents of Howard Hall, St. Elizabeths Hospital. They illustrate the character of creative expression in the Howard Hall Journal, and they suggest also the opportunity for evaluating the influence of TV programs on mental health, both in and out of the hospital.

This is one of those rare cases where the mountain comes to Mohammed. Only in this instance it is we, the hospital shut-ins, that are unable to go to the mountain, and it really isn't a mountain at all, it's the outer world. To us shut-ins, the world is divided into two parts, our own little isolated inside world and the outer world of people free to pursue their ends. One of the major problems to a shut-in is not that he is a shut-in, but rather that the outer

world is shut out. Perhaps most of us can understand and accept the fact that because of varying degrees of mental illness we are, out of necessity, shut-ins, but what many of us find so difficult to accept and understand is why so much of the outer world is shut out. Fortunately, we are not alone with our problems, for the administrative doctors of Howard Hall are well aware of our dilemma as evidenced by their unceasing efforts to bring to us as

much of the outer world as is practically possible. Certainly they are aware of our psychological need for contact with the outer world. One of the steps taken by the administration has done more to alleviate this situation than all others combined.

They presented us patients with the world on a string. They have brought the outer world, in all its entirety, into our recreational day rooms!

An ordinary, common garden variety electric world is the string that is tied to the world which in turn is encased in a small, square box: a television receiver! With a twist of the wrist and a flip of a dial, the outer world flows to meet our eyes! Mohammed's mountain was mere child's play in comparison with our wondrous little box. Instantaneously we are in the midst of a downtown crowd watching the parade of the Legionnaires, or we are riding in a brand new 1955 auto or watching the sports attraction of the day. There's the news and we are in Korea and then swiftly join a group of firemen in Chicago; then on to Washington for a meeting with the President and his Cabinet. We see the latest fashions and meet the outstanding personalities of the day. All of these things would be impossible were it not for this amazing little box.

One would think that the ability of this small box to bring the outer world to us is miracle enough, but no; it doesn't stop there. It goes beyond just mechanical function. It has dynamic effect on our morale, attitude, and emotions. It assumes a therapeutic role in every sense of the word. The rollicking laughter

that echoes down the hall when favorite comedians perform, the anxiety expression that comes with suspense and the intentness of concentration that comes with drama and quiz show are emotional entertainment. Our miraculous box constantly reminds us that there are comfortable living rooms with families gathered around a dinner table; that there are happy people, situations and circumstances. This serves to jar us out of the "just existing" attitudes and probes and jabs at our slumbering will to get well and "go home." It serves as a deterrent to keep the mind from becoming single tracked or in a rut or as some of us say, "institutionalized."

For it brings to us, at the exact moment, events that are taking place; it expands our isolated little community until it is as vast in scope as is the outer world. To those of us who are convalescing, it helps to prepare us for our return to society. It keeps us abreast of the times and the pulse of things so that when we do reach this outer world it is not a strange and unfamiliar place to adjust to. It gives its viewers a mutual sense of participation and interest. Educationally, its lessons are extensive in that it teaches us and gives plenty of practice in dem-

ocratic relationships with our fellow men. The selection of TV committees, scheduling programs, and the operation of the TV set help form the habit patterns of cooperative group spirit, teaching us to respect the other fellow's opinions, rights, and privileges.

In pausing to consider the significant role TV plays in our shut-in world, one can readily agree that this ingenious little box should never be taken for granted or underestimated. And in realizing the importance of TV, we should also take precautionary measures to insure its continued future use. A deeper sense of responsibility for this "World on a String" should be accepted by us all. We must all adjust ourselves to our neighbors' desires, opinions, and preferences so that all of us may enjoy the benefits of it without infringing upon the rights and privileges of fellow patients. In doing this we not only create more viewing pleasure for ourselves and others but we insure continued performance by our mechanical friend. Most important, it will give all of us practice and experience in getting along in a community of people. It will have its therapeutic effect and this is of primary concern to us shut-ins.

PHS Staff Announcements

Dr. Louis C. McCabe has been appointed staff adviser on air pollution to Mark D. Hollis, Assistant Surgeon General and chief engineer officer of the Public Health Service. Since 1951, Dr. McCabe has been chief of the Fuels and Explosives Division, Bureau of Mines, Department of the Interior. He served for 2 years as director of the Los Angeles County Air Pollution Control District.

Arthur C. Stern, formerly chief industrial hygiene engineer of the New York State Department of Labor, has assumed direction of the Public Health Service program of air pollution research and technical assistance to States and local agencies. He will be stationed at the Robert A. Taft Sanitary Engineering Center, Cincinnati.